BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

BRITISH COLUMBIA | ReadNowBC

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2007AE0057-001095
Sept. 7, 2007

Ministry of Advanced Education
Ministry of Education

ALL ADULT BASIC EDUCATION TO BE TUITION-FREE IN B.C.

VANCOUVER – The Province is investing $17.5 million under the second phase of ReadNow BC to make adult basic education tuition-free for all students and increase financial aid for adult learners, Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell and Education Minister Shirley Bond announced today.

"We are helping people upgrade their education so they can take advantage of our growing economy and enjoy rewarding careers," said Coell. "We're acting on the Campus 2020 report by offering free tuition for adult basic education, whether students have graduated from high school or not. We're also going beyond that by helping more adult learners pay for books, transportation and child care."

The change will be brought about in three stages. Effective immediately, all students can take courses free of charge through the Province's virtual school, LearnNowBC, at www.LearnNowBC.ca. Starting January 2008, all students will also have access to tuition-free adult basic education courses at 18 public post-secondary institutions around B.C. The third stage, starting September 2008, will allow all students to take free adult basic education courses through school districts.

"Free online courses available anywhere in the province through LearnNowBC are already giving adult learners more options than ever before," said Bond, who is responsible for literacy. "This expansion of adult basic education will help more learners improve their literacy skills and prepare for better futures."

The Ministry of Advanced Education will add $6.9 million to its annual $57-million investment in adult basic education. The Ministry of Education will add $3.1 million to its annual $34.5 million investment, plus another $1.5 million for LearnNow BC, fulfilling the Province's throne speech commitment of an Education Guarantee. About 28,000 learners enrol in adult basic education courses at public post-secondary institutions alone each year.

The Ministry of Advanced Education is also providing more than $17 million over the next three years – an added $6 million – for grants that help adult basic education students pay for books, supplies, transportation and child care while they study at a public post-secondary institution. Last year, about 2,900 adult basic education students received this funding, as well as more than 4,200 ESL and adult special education students.

ReadNow BC is a comprehensive literacy action plan to help provide adults, Aboriginal people, K-12 students and preschoolers with the skills they need to succeed. The plan's second phase also includes the launch of the ReadNow BC website at www.readnowbc.ca, and a database of literacy programs and services available throughout B.C., community by community. The database was developed by Literacy BC with $200,000 from the Ministry of Education.

-more-

ReadNow BC was introduced in January of this year with an investment of $27 million. Today's $17.5-million announcement, on the eve of International Literacy Day, brings that investment to nearly $44.5 million. Since 2001, the Province has announced over $123.5 million in new literacy programs and services in support of its goal of making British Columbia the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction in North America.

-30-

1 factsheet(s) attached.

Media contact:

Corinna Filion
Communications Manager
Ministry of Advanced Education
250 952-6400
250 812-7977 (cell)

Lara Perzoff
Public Affairs Bureau
Ministry of Education
250 356-5963
250 920-9040 (cell)

For more information on government services or to subscribe to the Province's news feeds using RSS, visit the Province's website at www.gov.bc.ca.

BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

BRITISH COLUMBIA The Best Place on Earth | ReadNowBC

FACTSHEET

2007AE0057-001095
Sept. 7, 2007

Ministry of Advanced Education
Ministry of Education

BASIC FACTS ABOUT ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

- Adult basic education ranges from basic literacy (reading, writing and math) to high school courses including law, history, calculus, chemistry and physics.

- Students enrol in adult basic education to complete their high school graduation (the B.C. Adult Graduation Diploma, or "Adult Dogwood"), prepare for further education at the post-secondary level, or gain employability and life management skills.

- Eighteen public post-secondary institutions offer adult basic education courses:
  - **12 colleges:** Camosun, Capilano, College of the Rockies, Douglas, Langara, North Island, Northern Lights, Northwest Community College, Okanagan, Selkirk, College of New Caledonia and Vancouver Community College.
  - **Three university colleges:** Kwantlen, Malaspina and University College of the Fraser Valley.
  - **Two provincial institutes:** B.C. Institute of Technology, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology.
  - **One university:** Thompson Rivers University and TRU Open Learning.

- In the K-12 system, adult education is delivered through the school districts and includes adult high school completion courses and continuing education programs. It is also delivered online through www.LearnNowBC.ca.

- Post-secondary institutions offer four levels of adult basic education:
  - **Adult literacy fundamental** (basic literacy to the equivalent of Grade 8 or 9), which includes reading, writing and basic skills with numbers needed in social, personal, work and educational situations.
  - **Intermediate** (about grades 9 and 10), including courses like math, science, English, social studies and computer studies.
  - **Advanced** (about Grade 11), where students begin to specialize.
  - **Provincial** (Grade 12), which prepares students for university, trades courses, technology programs, apprenticeships and the workforce.

- Adult basic education students in the public post-secondary system do not qualify for student loans, but are eligible for non-repayable grants if they have financial need. Government provides institutions with $5.7 million per year to reduce barriers by helping students pay for books, supplies, transportation, child care, and applicable fees. Students in adult basic education, ESL and adult special education programs can apply for these grants.

-more-

- Last year, about 2,900 adult basic education students received grants from this program, along with more than 4,200 ESL and adult special education learners.

-30-

Media contact:

Corinna Filion
Communications Manager
Ministry of Advanced Education
250 952-6400
250 812-7977 (cell)

Lara Perzoff
Public Affairs Bureau
Ministry of Education
250 356-5963
250 920-9040 (cell)

For more information on government services or to subscribe to the Province's news feeds using RSS, visit the Province's website at www.gov.bc.ca.